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Google Search Yields Results for Student Intern

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BLOOMINGTON, Ill.— When Alan Russian '15 begins his rigorous last semester at Illinois Wesleyan University, one thing he won't stress about is finding a job.

The **computer science** major has already accepted an offer from Google. A native of the Chicago suburb of Gurnee, Russian will move to Los Angeles following graduation in May.

The offer to become a full-time Googler came after Russian's summer internship with the company that tops *Fortune's* list of Best Companies to Work For. His intern-to-hire conversion reflects a growing trend in which companies and organizations nationwide increasingly use internships and co-ops as hiring pipelines for new employees.

Employers like Google, for example, made full-time offers to almost 65 percent of their interns, according to a recent survey by the National Association of Colleges and Employers. That's up from 56 percent in 2013. Kyle Ewing, Google's head of global staffing, said in a 2013 interview with *Fast Company* magazine that the company looks at its intern program as the best source of full-time talent. Laurie Diekhoff, internship coordinator at Illinois Wesleyan, said Russian's intern-to-offer experience is just one example of that upward trend for many Illinois Wesleyan students.

For Russian, the journey began prior to his junior year. He was among the 40,000 applicants for Google's internship program in 2013, but he wasn't invited to interview. Instead, he interned at Boeing Inc., the world's largest aerospace company. During his internship at Boeing, Google invited him to apply again. After two phone interviews where he had to solve a computer science problem in 45 minutes and additional interviews for specific projects, Russian secured a position in the summer 2014 internship program. He was assigned to the Los Angeles office for AdWords, Google's online advertising program that is the company's main source of revenue.

After learning he had been selected, curiosity led Russian to watch the 2013 film *The Internship*, which pits interns against each other in competition for full-time offers. That scenario is pure fiction, according to Russian.

"Everyone wants to get an offer for a job, but there is no competition between interns whatsoever," Russian said. "In fact, it's very supportive and we even helped each other with practice interviews."



The future is bright for Alan Russian, who will move to Los Angeles after graduation in May.



Senior Alan Russian has accepted a job offer from Google. (Photos by Jolene Bresney)

That supportive atmosphere extends from the newest employee to the top levels of management, Russian said. One of Russian's most valuable takeaways from his internship experience was the constructive criticism he received. "At first it was a little off-putting, but I learned to really like it and grow as an engineer based on the feedback I received," he explained. In addition, the company puts a high value on balancing work with a life outside the office.

Perhaps it's this relaxed atmosphere that helps Googlers to think big. Google's audacious projects – from driverless cars to glucose-monitoring contact lenses – result from '10x thinking.' The expectation is that Google employees will create products and services that are 10 times better than the competition. Russian said company-wide weekly meetings would often include presentations on the progress of similarly ambitious projects.

Meanwhile, Russian's last semester is offering its own set of challenges. In addition to his coursework, he's busy as president of ACM, the student chapter of the Association for Computing Machinery. This professional society is dedicated to

advancing human capabilities through information technology. Merging his current interests with his future goals, Russian led the charge in creating a self-guided tour of the Illinois Wesleyan campus using Google Glass. And Russian continues to map out his career path with advice from his mentor and advisor, Assistant Professor of Computer Science Mark Liffiton, who was also a Google summer intern while he was in graduate school.

“I never thought I’d be working for a company like Google,” said Russian. “But after seeing my computer science friends get internships at places like Amazon and Boeing, I made getting an internship at Google my goal.”